DC Department of Health Guidelines for Administering Rabies Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP): Human exposed to Domestic Animal (dog, cat, or ferret)

START

human exposed to domestic animal

Was the animal a mammal?

YES

PEP is not necessary, no rabies risk

NO

Was the animal displaying signs of rabies?

YES

Submit animal for rabies testing immediately. Administer PEP if test is positive or inconclusive.

NO

Animal captured?

YES

Consult with DOH
If exposure was from a stray cat or dog administer PEP

NO

Was the animal displaying signs of rabies?

YES

Administer PEP immediately

NO or UNKNOWN

PEP is not necessary

Quarantine animal for 10 days and observe for rabies

Animals are quarantined under the supervision of a veterinarian or DC animal control official

ATTENTION

- The only ways to determine there is no risk of rabies is for the biting animal to successfully complete a 10 day quarantine period or to test negative for rabies. The vaccination status of the animal alone cannot completely rule out risk.
- If an animal is not located within 3 days of the exposure, administer PEP.
- For bites that occur to the head or face it is recommended to start PEP immediately, even if the animal is located. For other bites, depending on their severity and your clinical judgement, PEP can be postponed until the outcome of the quarantine, or test, is known.